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MEMORANDUM FOR: Morning Meeting Participants

SUBJECT: Presidential Management Initiatives

Attached are the papers we have received from OMB on the Decision-Makers Checklist. As I explained in some detail at the morning meeting, the systematic approach to decision-making that these papers describe is one of the important aspects of the President's program for improving management throughout the Federal Government. This is, of course, a cooperative effort that I know we all enthusiastically support.

STAT

James H. Taylor  
Comptroller

Attachments:  
As Stated

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Whatever the mechanisms for bringing people together to achieve coordination in policy and program development and implementation, the likelihood that sound policies and programs will result can be considerably enhanced if each participant were to approach the issue, or bundle of issues, with at least similar perceptions about *how* such issue or issues should be analyzed -- and about the *technique* of determining what constitutes the "public interest."

Often the government decision-maker does not give systematic attention to the effects of his actions except as they relate to his own mission. This tendency is not easily cured.

Existing laws and regulations do not require and may not permit the consideration of Federal actions on the attainment of goals outside of individual mission areas. Further, the effects of Federal actions are often difficult to ascertain and to predict in advance. The data necessary to measure impacts are often unavailable, and methodologies for analysis of that data often do not exist.

Yet, it is increasingly necessary to take into account multiple impacts of a single Federal action on national goals. Consider the large number and variety of national goals. Most are well defined and long established; some have been more recently emphasized and raised in priority. To name only a few:

- maintenance of national security and defense of the country,
- preservation and enhancement of a private-enterprise (investment, risk, profit) society,
- economic freedom and efficiency through competition,
- full employment without harmful inflation,
- equal opportunity,
- for regulated industries, quality services at reasonable rates,
- safe and liveable communities, in both urban and rural areas,
- preservation of important natural resources, and clean air and water,
- secure and reasonably priced energy sources,
- decent, safe, and sanitary housing, preferably owner-occupied, and
- health, education, and public safety services adequate for individual self-fulfillment.

DECISION-MAKER'S CHECKLIST

- ° *What is the public problem being addressed?*
  - . Is the problem real or apparent?
  - . Is it a symptom of a larger problem?
  - . Can the problem be quantified? How large is it?
  - . What are its components?
  - . Are forces at work that are either solving the problem or making it worse?
  - . Does the public perceive a problem?
  - . Are those who perceive the problem directly affected by it? By attempts to solve it?
- ° *What institution is best equipped to solve the problem?*
  - . Is it a problem that needs to be solved?
  - . Can the private sector alone resolve the problem effectively?  
Is there a role for the private sector in the solution?
  - . On what basis is it a problem that principally government should address?
- ° *What are the alternate feasible means to solve the problem?*
  - . Which of these best fit with the principles of this Administration?
  - . To what extent would each of these solve the problem? With what probability?
  - . Are the means proposed to solve the problem well suited to attain the desired ends?
  - . If a governmental response is indicated, can it be effectively incorporated within a current program?
- ° *Are there identifiable inadvertent or second order effects from the proposed solution?*
  - . Can such effects be minimized if undesirable (inflation, excessive paperwork regulations, etc.)?
  - . Maximized if desirable?
  - . Do such effects alter the desirability of the action?
- ° *Does the problem, the approach proposed to solve it, or the effect intersect with other public programs or goals?*
  - . Should other agencies be consulted?
  - . How should any such issues be resolved?
- ° *What methods of evaluation can be designed at the outset for measurement of the effects of the proposed action?*

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Thus the policy-makers' task is to understand, as well as possible, how and whether present and proposed actions affect these goals.

This requires:

- ° Systematic review in the course of decision-making of the possible effects, not just on the mission goal of each decision-maker, but on other national goals as well.
- ° Improved evaluation of existing activities with emphasis on both attainment of the mission goal and effects on other goals.

Much easier said than done. A very useful step in this direction would be efforts toward developing, refining and using an agreed upon set of guidelines for the Federal decision-making process. Such guidelines might well be in the form of sets of questions that should be answered, insofar as feasible, in assessing, on a one time or periodic basis, existing policies and programs and in considering new proposals. Such an effort toward a "decision-maker's checklist" will require extensive participation and indeed debate among many parties. For purposes of illustration, such a list is attached hereto.